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Planning

Social Work National Professional Development Offer Market Engagement

Department for Education

UK2: Preliminary market engagement notice - Procurement Act 2023 - [view information about notice types](#)

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Scope

Reference

project_10342

Description

The Department for Education (DfE) is exploring the development of a national professional development offer for Child and Family Social Workers to strengthen post-qualification support and create clearer career pathways that recognise the specialised skills required for child protection work.

DfE is seeking to engage with the market to help inform the design and potential delivery approach for a future Social Work National Professional Development Offer (SWNPDO)

Indicative Programme scope:

Programme components:

The Early Career Development Programme (ECDP)

An enhanced early career offer that would extend support for child and family social workers from one year to two years, underpinned by new professional Standards, which set out the knowledge and skills expected by the end of year two.

Advanced Child Protection Programme (ACPP)

A proposed 12 month programme for Lead Child Protection Practitioners (LCPP) and those aspiring to the role, focused on strengthening advanced child protection knowledge and skills to support effective delivery within multi agency child protection teams

Leadership and Supervision Programme

A proposed national programme to support Children's Social Care leaders below Director level, aimed at equipping leaders to drive change, strengthen multi agency collaboration, and support improved outcomes for children and families.

DCS Leadership Programme

Support and development for aspirant and new DCSs that strengthens leadership and enables effective delivery.

Next Steps and Market Engagement

DfE is considering its approach to the procurement and development of SWNPDO and is keen to engage with suppliers on programme design and delivery models.

Supplier experience and capability (indicative)

To support this engagement, the Department would be interested in feedback from suppliers with experience in:

- Delivering large scale professional training or workforce development programmes
- Change management and evaluating impact
- Designing accessible, inclusive and compliant learning solutions

These capability areas are indicative and do not constitute formal selection or evaluation criteria.

Feedback from the market will be taken into consideration to help shape the department's proposed scope to ensure that the offer meets the sector's needs.

Important notice

This notice:

- Does not signify the commencement of a competitive procurement
- Does not constitute any commitment by the Department for Education to procure services
- Does not create any obligation on the Department

The DfE is keen to maximise opportunities to participate in procurement for Small to Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSEs). Consideration will be given to consortia and collaborative bids from all forms of organisations.

Any funding estimates referenced are indicative only and subject to change. The Department makes no commitment at this stage to the final scope or funding envelope of any future contractual activity.

We are currently reviewing the length of service and the budget for SWNPDO, and these details will be confirmed at a later date.

The contract start date provided is indicative, and both the start and end dates will be confirmed in due course.

Commercial tool

Establishes a framework

Total value (estimated)

- £0 excluding VAT
- £0.01 including VAT

Above the relevant threshold

Contract dates (estimated)

- 1 January 2027 to 1 January 2027
- 1 day

Main procurement category

Services

CPV classifications

- 80510000 - Specialist training services

Contract locations

- UKC - North East (England)
- UKD - North West (England)
- UKF - East Midlands (England)
- UKG - West Midlands (England)
- UKH - East of England
- UKJ - South East (England)
- UKK - South West (England)

Engagement

Engagement deadline

31 March 2026

Engagement process description

The Department will be holding an initial supplier engagement event on 09 February 2026 from 11:00am to 12:15pm.

This event is open to all potential suppliers, regardless of previous engagement with the Department. The event will provide an overview of the Social Work National Professional Development Offer (SWNPDO) outline and upcoming market engagement activities scheduled shortly afterwards.

Following the event, suppliers will be invited to complete a questionnaire to register for the 1-2-1 sessions which will be held between 13th and 19th February 2026.

Additional 1-2-1 sessions may be held in March 2026 and will provide final opportunity to clarify any outstanding queries.

All correspondence will be shared via Jaggaer.

Participation

Particular suitability

- Small and medium-sized enterprises (SME)
- Voluntary, community and social enterprises (VCSE)

Contracting authority

Department for Education

- Public Procurement Organisation Number: PDZG-3487-DPVD

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Organisation type: Public authority - central government